



MINUTES
Community Forum
Log Cabin - 640 NE 114th Street
Biscayne Park, FL 33161
Saturday, December 17, 2016 at 9:30am

I Welcome and Workshop Overview

Mayor Truppmann called the meeting to order at 9:35am, and provided an overview of the format of the meeting.

Present from the Commission: Mayor Tracy Truppmann, Vice Mayor David Coviello, Commissioner Jenny Johnson-Sardella, Commissioner Roxanna Ross and Commissioner William Tudor.

Present from Staff: Village Manager Sharon P. Ragoonan and Village Clerk Maria C. Camara

II Police Department

Manager Ragoonan provided a status report and information relating to the Police Department. The Manager also provided a form to allow residents to provide their feedback.

Mayor Truppmann opened the meeting to public input:

Harvey Bilt: Traffic enforcement has gone down hill; 121st & 6th Avenue right turn only has not been enforced; how are we utilizing our reserve officers; familiar with a resident who is moving out because they do not feel safe; has seen an uptick in crime; how many tickets have been issued; have noticed revenues from tickets has gone down.

Ernesto Oliva: Always saw police when moved in three years ago, but not the case anymore; it is crazy on 10th Avenue in regards to speeding; like to walk, but now feel uncomfortable; how can we improve; willing to pay \$1,000 for something more like speed bumps; when police are visible, they all behave; many residents do not respect values and we need to remind them; traffic in the county is out of control and we are a pass through.

Chester Morris: Many years ago we used to do traffic stops on 6th Avenue and it is perfectly legal to do so. People will pay attention.

Millie DiSanti: 7th Avenue and 119th Street has high traffic between 4pm and 5:30pm due to high traffic from 125th Street and traffic cuts through; speeding and number of cars increases; want to see more enforcement.

Milton Hunter: Had a visit with former Chief Mitch Glansberg. He was a working Chief. The priority of our cases at crime lab low, not a good source to solve crimes; feels we do not need a full time detective; visibility of the force is greater; provides a better presence; have seen lack of tickets issued; need to understand what we are looking for in the policing style; perception is the reality.

Laura Graves: Agree with all the comments; moved in 19 years ago and felt safer; now Griffing Blvd is a race track; so is 6th Avenue and 121st Street; more time is spent by the Police on northeast corner of Village - what for? Don't agree with sitting back on this; need to jump on this now.

Judith Gersten: Agree with Mr. Hunter; this is a question of prioritizing procedures and policies to protect our community; all east/west streets - you can set your watch on time of day when the traffic starts to pick up; used to see a school bus cut through, speeding; lack of patrolling and visibility.

Gary Kuhl: On running stop signs, a prevalent issue; we used to have a reputation, "don't even think of speeding"; we lost control of engagement with officers; saw vehicles from several other agencies in the N Miami parade and none of them had tinted windows; knowing our force creates ease of accessibility; we lost that; don't know who our officers are.

David Raymond: Living in North Miami Beach before and was always scared to drive through Biscayne Park; have now seen a change; police cars going by has diminished; early rush hour time it is a speed track; suggested getting patrolling stats, but never got an answer from prior Chief.

Janey Anderson: In last few years, the noticed change is we used to have a working Chief; used to have "click it or ticket"; showed a presence and criminals were found during stops; also brought in revenues.

Ed Chisholm: Agree we all; police speed down 114th going to the police station; 8th Avenue, 10th Avenue and 113th Street are speedways in the morning; crazed mothers with kids trying to make the light; have spoken to police, but nothing done; parking empty cars doesn't do it.

Brad Piper: Have had this discussion for years; increase in population has increased the cut throughs and crime; we have just so many officers; we need to implement steps for the future; need to control 24/7 and believe speed bumps is the answer; this is a permanent solution.

Dan Samaria: Our officers do a good job; need to bring back "click it or ticket"; need to get more reserve officers; need to have a reserve officer in the office when clerk is not there; need to have officers walk the beat or on bicycles; this would improve relationship with community.

Barbara Kuhl: Agree officers need to be out on the street; at Recreation Center at end of day, see vehicles with dark tinted windows and lights drive around - a very confrontational appearance; better to get out of the vehicle and build a better relationship; all see a lack of police presence; no one is afraid of Biscayne Park - you can speed, blow through stop signs; improve presence first before adding speed bumps.

Fred Jonas: Before we had a detective, had a burglary in my home. Called Biscayne Park Police and they were not hopeful in finding out who committed the crime. With the addition of detective, more attention given to resolving crimes.

Dan Keys: Have heard it all before; both sides have been heard; have seen increase in infiltration from outsiders; identify these areas and have a presence; if less presence, ask the question, what are they doing then; agree that increase in traffic is due to increase in population overall; commission should engage Miami-Dade County Traffic and FDOT on road closure ideas or other ideas to reduce our issues; look at 6th Avenue and 119th Street - what you hear is anecdotal; don't act immediately and take next steps to investigate first; the police should try to engage everyone walking in the community; roll down the window and engage.

Bob Anderson: Officers used to be required to drive with their windows down; public had better chance to have interaction; provide opportunity to find out what the issues are at certain properties or streets; officers used to do more stops for even minor infractions; our reputation used to be that we would find out they were wanted with these stops and showed our police were pro-active; we want to see that reputation come back.

Alexander Bernhard: Talking to people is very productive; speed bumps would be amazing; check out some that are not so abrupt.

Summer Williams: At 117th Street, roll through stops; 9th Avenue is a raceway; moved in four years ago and used to hear of our "no speeding" reputation; used to see police all the time, but not now; see police vehicles parked side by side - why?; why has police presence changed.

Chuck Ross: We have limited resources; key is to build up reserve force; used to provide better enforcement; agree with the speeding during rush hours; agree with increase of cut throughs.

Rosemary Wais: Police vehicles parked side by side could be a tandem traffic stop.

Mayor Truppan asked for feedback on "Community Policing" and on Reserve officers:

David Raymond: A good idea; was shot down before due to short staffing - only two officers per shift; think we can improve that; more walk, bike and open vehicle patrol.

Dan Keys: Number of reserves up and down over the years; need to ask why we don't have more; have been frustrated when calling non-emergency line - need to have tough conversation with the County; tread slowly on speed bumps/tables; driving through the community with those is very annoying.

Bob Anderson: On reserves, used to have more. Difficult to get a good one; many are rejects who just want to keep their certification; some departments pay their reserve officers; we are competing with other agencies; should continue to look for more, but be careful on the background.

Barbara Kuhl: Parking on the medians - this is a police issue and need to issue tickets; 8th Avenue looks like a parking lot.

Harvey Bilt: Signage used to be enough to issue tickets, but now it is not - why?; it can be enforced and it should be; this can start immediately; former Manager spoke with Miami-Dade County and we are allowed to put speed bumps on our roads; nothing ever done on this; two accidents earlier this month, and have we reached out to FDOT to find out why?

Chester Morris: On speed bumps, who will pay for them? Visit Park Drive in El Portal and Miami Shores.

Vice Mayor Coviello: Would like to recognize Officer Omar Martinez for his efforts. Do not see this as criticizing our officers, rather we need to change policies from the top down.

Barbara Watts: Need better quality reserve officers; allocate OT funding to pay reserve officers; agree about parking on medians, but don't want to see an increase in signage; track crime to find out where it is happening and increase patrol.

Mayor Truppmann asked for input on reporting:

Harvey Bilt: Would like to see monthly reporting including number of hours worked for each officer.

David Raymond: Is there an available software; would like monthly stats on tickets issued, crime; can we look at reducing speed from 25 to 20mph; Surfside is currently at 20mph.

Barbara Watts: Want to know what the Chief and Detective are doing.

Bob Anderson: Weekly Manager report had information on all departments. Police had number of arrests, tickets, etc.

III Code Compliance

Manager Ragoonan provided a status report and information relating to the Code Compliance Department.

Mayor Truppmann opened the meeting to public input:

Gary Kuhl: Conversation needs to start with communication; a lot of confusion on driveway ordinance; not everyone understands the administrative citation process; need to inform about voluntary compliance; address the easily correctable items first; have a lot of sense of pride, but we have the broken window effect.

Janey Anderson: Start with basic housekeeping; grass, care of swales, paint; there are still properties with trash bins in the front in plain view; this is the first thing we see driving through the Village; need to clean up our act.

Alexander Bernhard: Vehicle for code, recommend lease on an electric vehicle; no maintenance or fuel costs; good for the environment.

Barbara Kuhl: Biggest problem is lack of education; nothing comes to my house; should have letter sent to all properties with information and schedules; how can Waste Pro help educate; a lot of houses with liens and ignoring fines; they are never notified after initial notice; why aren't they reminded; this would get houses in compliance if they knew.

David Raymond: Used to have a group to help residents come into compliance; maybe some have no means to fix.

Bob Anderson: Should be a list of the top 10 this to improve and to send out to all homeowners; address it as a notice of a sweep with dates to allow to correct; used to be a Civic Club that assisted residents.

Dale Blanton: Many who come before the Code Compliance Board do not know the situation at their property; need to make property owners that rent their properties be more responsible.

Charlie Easton: When you help others, they will help you.

Barbara Watts: Notices should go to property owners and the resident.

Dan Keys: Different types of homes - single family and rentals; talk to rental properties on their own; agree with looking first at general housekeeping like lawn care; meet with realtors and appeal to them; provide curb appeal seminar; educate on the actual code compliance process.

Milton Hunter: Like the idea of before/after pictures of houses; start from scratch on outreach; acceptable standards for all facets of property; enforce current codes without prejudice including commissioners; we have a giving community, but it is challenging to organize and there are those who don't want to accept the help; awkward to report on neighbors when it should be the Code Officer who sees it; there is clear visual blight.

Harvey Bilt: Pass ordinances that are easy to understand; on garbage cans left out, that is the Commission's fault for not maintaining the side yard service; for simple code violations, can we fine the tenants?

Judith Gersten: Used to be a hearing officer and know the process; hears an aesthetics issue and property values a common theme; property owners are solely responsible; there has to be a firm procedure and proper notification; a great idea to help those in need; happy to work with and give guidance on process and language.

Millie DiSanti: Have side yard pick up, yet have had to call Waste Pro for missed pickups every two weeks.

Linda Dillon: Where can we plan on the property? Have allowed plantings to grow into the swale and the road; example is 6th Avenue, Griffing and 118th Street; scratches car driving by; need to enforce this.

Jared Susi: New construction sites need to be maintained; some cities have regulations requiring privacy fence during construction; need to look into.

Gary Kuhl: Construction sites are an attractive nuisance; building official needs to work with Code Officer; finalizing projects without doing required work per code continues; example, fence installed without proper finishing and landscaping.

Dale Blanton: Medians and cut throughs, obvious residents are doing the cut through as the tracks lead directly to their property. Need to send notice to property owner.

Jafari Allen: New owner. How can we beautify our medians? Can we plant in the median?

Bob Anderson: At intersections, foliage blocking incoming traffic; site triangle issues at corner properties; police need to be proactive as well as Code; don't wait for an accident.

Barbara Kuhl: Village needs to set the example; the Village has code issues like garbage cans not screened; improper landscaping, building infrastructure issues.

Ernesto Oliva: On beautification, look at property at 10th Avenue and 120th Street - looks like a disaster. Need to work on that.

Janey Anderson: Get serious on landlords to keep up with code issues; need to do inspections; this serves as a notice for landlords to keep up their properties.

David Raymond: Had reinspection done on property, but an extra bedroom added on was not caught.

Dan Keys: On crossing the medians, do not address it by planting materials only for that purpose; need the police to address it in a professional way; if Commission wants to do plantings in the median, have a thorough discussion; issues are costly to correct and discussion needs to be had first.


IV Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Mayor Truppman, the Commission and Manager Ragoonan thanked everyone that participated and provided input.


The meeting was adjourned at 12:02pm

Commission approved on January 10, 2017.

Attest:



Tracy Truppman, Mayor



Maria Camara, Village Clerk